



HANDHELDS FAQ

Q Some PDAs are now being shipped with Windows Mobile 5 installed. How does this differ from the previous version?

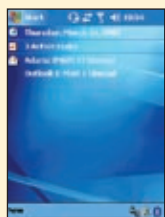
A Windows Mobile 5 is the replacement for Windows Mobile 2003 Second Edition. It includes a number of behind-the-scenes improvements that make it easier for developers to write programs for the OS, plus more obvious benefits.

One of the chief advantages is the addition of support for persistent memory. Until recently, if your PDA's batteries ran out you would lose all your data, so it was essential to synchronise regularly with your PC. Persistent memory doesn't need power to maintain its data, so PDAs with this feature are more reliable. Your PDA must have persistent memory installed for this to work.

As well as improvements to the Word Mobile, Excel Mobile and PowerPoint Mobile programs, Windows Mobile 5 supports the latest version of ActiveSync, which lets you synchronise your PDA with your PC over Bluetooth.

Finally, Media Player 10 Mobile synchronises with the PC version of Media Player 10, copying music and videos to your PDA and converting the files to a compatible format and size.

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▲ Windows Mobile 5 has several improvements

REVIEW MOBILE PHONE

MOTOROLA ROKR E1

RATING ★★

PRICE Free to £70 with contract; £250 SIM-free

SUPPLIER www.carphonewarehouse.com

(contract), www.play.com (SIM-free)

DETAILS www.motorola.co.uk

Mobile phones that can play music files have been around for at least three years, but most phones require a third-party application or have very primitive music and playlist support. Motorola's E1 is the first handset to come with a pre-installed version of Apple's iTunes software, which can synchronise with iTunes on your PC.

Apart from its white finish, the E1 looks like a standard Motorola phone. The music button under the screen takes you directly to the iTunes application. The keypad's large keys are easy to press, but the joystick is annoyingly unresponsive and often caused us to select the wrong option.

Getting music on to the phone is simple. Once you've installed the latest version of iTunes on your PC you simply plug the E1 in through the USB port or connect using Bluetooth and, after a short pause, iTunes detects the device. You can drag music to the phone's icon one song at a time, create a playlist to copy or even get the software to select tracks randomly until the phone's memory is full.

Copying tracks over Bluetooth is predictably slow, but so is the USB connection. Filling the phone's 512MB memory takes around 20 minutes, which is no good if you want to fill it quickly before going out. Songs are stored on a removable 512MB TransFlash card, but the phone's software limits it to a maximum of 100 songs, presumably to avoid competition with the iPod nano.

The phone's iTunes software looks the same as the software on any iPod, but it's much slower.



There is a delay of around a second between pressing a key and the phone responding, which makes browsing tedious. The supplied headphones are of reasonable quality, but still far inferior to those supplied with the Sony Ericsson W800 (see below) due to their lack of bass.

The ROKR E1 also suffers by comparison with the W800 when you consider the built-in cameras. The W800's 2-megapixel camera produced the best photos we had seen from a phone, but Motorola's

E1 makes do with a VGA sensor. Images are muddy, blocky and nowhere near good enough to print.

Despite all this, the E1 works well as a phone. Call quality is clear and battery life is good enough to last for a couple of days of moderate use. The texting application is also logical and easy to use, if rather prone to lag.

After all the hype surrounding its launch, Motorola's E1 is a colossal anticlimax. Transferring music to the phone is easy, but the audio quality is only average through the standard headphones and the slow iTunes application is frustrating to use and limited to 100 songs. The camera is also very poor, so compared with Sony Ericsson's W800, Motorola's ROKR E1 looks distinctly substandard.

Chris Finnamore



Works well with desktop iTunes software



Handset's iTunes application runs slowly; limited capacity; awful camera

SPECIFICATIONS Music phone, 512MB TransFlash card, 176x220-resolution TFT display, USB, Bluetooth, VGA camera, 600 minutes talktime, 230 hours standby, 108x46x21mm, weighs 107g. **Part code** E1 - ROKR

HOTLIST PDA

PALM LifeDrive

RATING ★★★★★

PRICE £287 inc VAT

SUPPLIER www.amazon.co.uk

DETAILS www.palm.com

Palm's LifeDrive is a Palm OS-based PDA with an integrated 4GB hard disk. It has all the usual Palm organiser functions, but can also be used as an audio and video player, or simply for storage.

The PDA doesn't come with headphones, but audio playback is impressive. The LifeDrive is good value for a combined PDA and audio player.



SPECIFICATIONS Multimedia PDA, Palm OS 5.4, 416MHz Intel XScale processor, 4GB disk space, Bluetooth, 802.11b wireless networking, SD card slot

HOTLIST MOBILE PHONE

SONY ERICSSON W800

RATING ★★★★★

PRICE £330 SIM-free; from free to £200 with contract

SUPPLIER www.onedaymobile.com

(SIM-free); Orange/Vodafone/O₂/T-Mobile/Virgin (contract)

DETAILS www.sonyericsson.co.uk

This is a superb music player and phone in one. Transferring music to the phone is easy using the supplied software, and the phone's music-playing application is fast. Sound quality is superb, and the camera is the best we have seen on a phone.



SPECIFICATIONS Music phone, tri-band, 400 hours standby, 540 minutes talk time, Bluetooth/IR connectivity, radio, 512MB memory Stick Duo, 176x200-pixel display, 99g, 100x46x20.5mm (HWD). **Part code** W800

HOTLIST SMARTPHONE

PALM Treo 650

RATING ★★★★★

PRICE £400 SIM-free; £100-£260 w/contract

SUPPLIER www.amazon.co.uk (SIM-free);

www.orange.co.uk (contract)

DETAILS www.palm.com

The Treo 650 replaces Palm's previous smartphone, the Treo 600. It runs the latest version of Palm OS and has a much-improved, higher-resolution screen. The normal Graffiti handwriting recognition system is replaced by a QWERTY keyboard under the screen, which is easy to use. It also works well as a phone despite its chunky size. It's expensive SIM-free, but better value with a mobile phone contract.



SPECIFICATIONS Smartphone, Palm OS 5.4.5, 312MHz Intel PXA270 processor, 23MB RAM, VGA camera, Bluetooth, infrared, GPRS, SD card slot. **Part code** 1040EU



REVIEW PDA

T-MOBILE
MDA Pro

RATING ★★★★★

PRICE £150 to £350 inc VAT
depending on contract

SUPPLIER T-Mobile 01707 315000

DETAILS www.t-mobile.co.uk

The MDA Pro is T-Mobile's latest Windows Mobile-based PDA and phone combination. Like the MDAIII reviewed in *Shopper* May 2005, it has a built-in QWERTY keyboard for messaging and editing Word documents, but instead of a keyboard that slides down below the screen the PDA opens up to reveal a full landscape keyboard. It's also the first PDA we've seen that has Windows Mobile 5 installed.

The MDA Pro is reminiscent of Nokia's Communicator in design, but instead of having a small screen on the outside of the flip for the phone application and a large one inside for the PDA's main functions, the MDA Pro's lid swivels round and closes so that the device looks like a standard PDA. The hinge and swivel mechanism feel extremely well made, and the PDA feels solid and durable.

When the PDA is open it resembles a miniature notebook. The screen automatically changes orientation to landscape when you are using the keyboard, and its high 640x480 resolution makes Word and Excel documents easy to edit. The keyboard is not big enough for touch-typing, but writing short text documents is fast with two fingers or thumbs thanks to the keys' raised centres.

With the PDA closed you can enter information using the stylus and Windows Mobile's handwriting recognition software. You have the option of entering text one letter at a time in a

dedicated section of the screen or writing entire sentences anywhere on the display for the software to recognise. The recognition software works reasonably well, but using the virtual onscreen keyboard is still faster.



The MDA Pro is hard to fault as a communication device. It has 802.11b wireless as standard, and can connect to the internet using 3G or GPRS. T-Mobile's internet settings are configured as standard, but setting up your own connection is difficult as Windows Mobile's connection manager is overcomplicated. The high-resolution landscape display is ideal for viewing web pages, though, and Pocket Internet Explorer does a good job of

resizing pages to fit the screen.

The MDA Pro works reasonably well as a mobile phone. Call quality is clear, and the phone application integrates seamlessly with Pocket Outlook. When the PDA is closed you can still answer calls, but as there is no external display you can't see who is calling. Its main problem is its size – holding it to your ear is uncomfortable.

This is a far more accomplished device than the MDAIII, and its easy-to-use keyboard makes it a reasonable notebook substitute. It also has all the connectivity options you need, but its size compromises it as a mobile phone.

Chris Finnamore

✓ High-resolution screen; good keyboard; excellent connectivity

✗ Large and heavy

SPECIFICATIONS Windows Mobile 5, 520MHz Intel PXA270 processor, 48MB RAM, 3.6" 640x480 screen, 3G/GPRS/Bluetooth/802.11b/1R/USB connectivity, built-in QWERTY keyboard, 1.3-megapixel camera, SD card slot, 79x22x132mm, weighs 210g

HOTLIST POCKET PC

ACER
n50 Premium

RATING ★★★★★

PRICE £238 inc VAT

SUPPLIER www.dabs.comDETAILS www.acer.co.uk

Acer's n50 won a Best Buy award in our PDA Megatest (*Labs*, *Shopper* August 2005) with its powerful performance, stylish looks and low price. It has a brushed metal effect casing and simple, uncluttered design. Applications start up almost instantly. It has good battery life and infrared, Bluetooth and wireless networking built in, as well as a generous 124MB of user-available storage. Excellent value.



SPECIFICATIONS Intel PXA272 520MHz processor, 124.27MB RAM, SD card slot, Windows Mobile 2003 SE, weighs 150g.
Part code CP.N500H.024

HOTLIST SMARTPHONE GPS KIT

NAVICORE
Personal for
Symbian Series 60

RATING ★★★★★

PRICE £175 inc VAT

SUPPLIER www.mobilefun.co.ukDETAILS www.navicoretech.com

Navicore's Personal is a GPS navigation system for the Symbian Series 60 operating system, as used by Nokia and Siemens smartphones. It consists of a Bluetooth GPS receiver and an RS MMC card containing the map program.

Planning a route is easy thanks to the logical software, and voice prompts are clear and accurate. It's not cheap, but it's the best GPS system for a series 60 phone.

SPECIFICATIONS GPS Navigation for Symbian Series 60 OS, SiRF III Bluetooth GPS receiver, UK maps. Part code 133-8432



CHOOSING A...

PALM
PDA

Five points to remember when buying a Palm handheld device

1 The Palm operating system (Palm OS) is produced by PalmSource, and the largest computer manufacturer in the field is Palm. A high-end Palm PDA, such as the Tungsten T5, may be based around an Intel XScale 416MHz processor. However, Palm OS isn't as demanding as Pocket PC, and also uses slower processors such as Texas Instruments' 126MHz OMAP. Most Palm PDAs have a processor speed of around 200-300MHz, which is sufficient to run multimedia applications.

2 Palm PDAs are touch-screen driven and support handwriting recognition. For this, the Palm OS uses a system called Graffiti, which requires users to learn special shapes for some letters.

3 All PDAs based on the Palm OS come with at least a calendar, address book, to-do list, jotter and memo pad. They synchronise with your PC or Mac to make sure the information on both is identical. More advanced Palms include email, SMS and web browsing, voice memo recording, the transfer of Office documents, music, photo and video players, e-book readers and databases.

4 The latest version of Palm OS is 5.4, but various versions are always in circulation. Which one is used in a device depends on the market the PDA is aimed at. PalmSource has decided to do away with version numbers for this reason. Palm OS Garnet is used in the Tungsten PDAs, while Palm OS Cobalt is aimed at communication-type devices such as smartphones.

5 Some Palm PDAs have integrated mobile phone capabilities; these are known as smartphones. Most Palm PDAs can be linked with mobile phones using a cable or, better still, Bluetooth wireless interfaces. A Palm PDA's Bluetooth interface can be used to communicate with any similarly equipped gadget, such as a GPS receiver.

FILL IN YOUR SPECS HERE

(Recommended minimum in grey)

PROCESSOR: Texas Instruments OMAP 126MHz

SCREEN: 160x160 pixels, monochrome

OPERATING SYSTEM: Palm OS 5